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A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE

PRIMARY VISITATION

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

CHARLES,

LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH,

HELD AT NEWMARKET, JUNE 6, 1794.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

FAITH BY HEARING.

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RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

CHARLES, MANNERS SUTTON

LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH,

HELD AT NEWMARKET, JUNE 6, 1794.

BY W. B. JONES,
VICAR OF CLARE, IN SUFFOLK.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

CHARLES,

(BY DIVINE PERMISSION)

LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH, &c. &c.

THE FOLLOWING

SERMON

IS INSCRIBED, WITH THE UTMOST GRATITUDE,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBEDIENT AND FAITHFUL

HUMBLE SERVANT,

W. B. JONES.

CLARE, JUNE 10, 1794.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A

VISITATION SERMON.

ROMANS, CHAP. X. VER. 17.

FAITH COMETH BY HEARING.

THE argument which ariſes out of this text is very ſhort, and when rightly conſidered, will be found unanſwerable. In the Holy Scriptures, *faith* is the *only* principle of obedience. We are there aſſured, that it is impoſſible to *pleaſe* God without it; and as the pleaſing of God is the end of all religion, then it follows, that there is no *religion* without *faith:* and as there can be no *faith* in what a man thinks or invents within himſelf, but only in that which is told him, it thence appears that there can be no faith, and conſequently no religion, but by *revelation.*

If the Scriptures are true, this argument is true; and as there is a falſe and dangerous philoſophy gone out of late into the world, which renounces the principle of *faith*, and *ridicules*

every thing we have *heard*; overthrowing all religion, and all lawful authority, and with them the peace and ſecurity of all Chriſtian people. Our time, I truſt, will not be miſemployed, on ſuch an occaſion as the preſent, if we look more attentively than we have been accuſtomed to do of late years, into the pretenſions of human reaſon; which have been too haſtily admitted, and have ſubjected men to the worſt uſurpation that ever yet prevailed in the world. The whole evil hath proceeded from the abuſe of reaſon; for the detecting of which, let it only be conſidered, that *faith* is the eſſence of all true religion, and that faith cannot be exerciſed till it has a revelation from God for its object; conſequently that there can be no *religion* but by *revelation*. Faith is that virtue which receives the *word* of God, upon the *teſtimony* of God. Abraham is ſaid to have believed God, on no other teſtimony but his *promiſe*; ſubmitting to a ſevere command, from a reliance on the performance of that promiſe; and it was accounted to him for *righteouſneſs*: that is, he was accepted and approved as a *faithful* ſervant of God, the father of all thoſe who believe after his example. The ſervice which God requires of men is the obedience of faith: and a ſervice ſo hard this is to the mind of man, ſo contrary to the pride of his natural wiſdom, that the trial is very ſevere. Yet the Apoſtle aſſures us, that no other obedience will avail us; that all the ſaints of old were accepted for their *faith*: that is, as he explains it, for believing things not ſeen as yet, and acting in conſequence of that belief. The Scripture here gives us a principle, which being once admitted, the *reaſon* of man becomes of no effect in matters of religion; for no man will

pretend

pretend that he can reveal to *himſelf* things inviſible, or pleaſe God as Noah did, when he built an ark, in conſequence of his believing that the world would be drowned, when as yet there was no appearance of it, becauſe God had told him ſo. I repeat it again, that *faith*, according to the terms of the text, can ariſe only from that which is *heard*, therefore not from any thing that is *thought* or *imagined*. A man can believe only in conſequence of what has been *told* him: in other words, he cannot *invent*, he muſt be informed of the objects of his belief.

There can be no plainer doctrine than this: it is the decided doctrine of the Holy Scriptures; and the principle which has operated more or leſs in all ages of the world. The Heathens ſuppoſed their religious doctrines to have been *received*, not *invented*—and they were right; for their prieſthood, and ſacrifices, and purifications were all borrowed from Revelation; without which thoſe rites would never have entered into the heart of man. The whole was a pervertion of ſacred Truth; but the imitation was ſo cloſe and ſo general, that the Heathen religion, in this view of it, may almoſt be conſidered as a Jewiſh hereſy. The Jew even now worſhips God in virtue of what has been told him; and for his faith only, ſuch as it is, he hopes to be accepted. Even the Turk performs a ſervice in conſequence of what he has been told: his obedience is all built on a ſuppoſed meſſage from heaven; which, whether it be true or falſe, is ſufficient to prove that he is convinced of our *principle*. And ſo were all mankind; till, of late years, the philoſopher undertook to ſtrike out a religion from his own reaſon; in which religion, as there is nothing *told*, there is nothing to be believed: and ſo it is

without that principle which alone ever did, or ever will, make religion acceptable.

Truth is more eaſily attainable from a conſideration of *facts*, than from abſtract ſpeculations. Let us therefore conſider religion as a matter of fact, and we ſhall ſee how the caſe ſtands between God, and human reaſon. It is a fact then, that the firſt man had a religion given him in paradiſe. Submiſſion to the word of God, was the obedience required of him before the fall. The ſocial law was ſettled by the inſtitution of marriage. After the fall, the inſtitution of ſacrifice took place, in conſequence of the Revelation of the promiſed ſeed, and to keep up the belief of it, religious worſhip was eſtabliſhed, and men "*called on the name of the Lord**". If they called upon him, they muſt have *heard* of him; for, ſaith the Apoſtle, "*how ſhall they call on him of whom they have not heard?*" Therefore, when the firſt men that were upon the earth called on the name of the Lord, they muſt have been under *revelation*; and all the religion they practiſed was derived from it. The ſame holds through all the hiſtory of the Patriarchs. *Noah* built an ark through *faith*; ſomething had been told him; he was warned of the flood; he believed that warning, and acted accordingly. All the Patriarchs are celebrated for their *faith*; conſequently a revelation was either *made*, or delivered to them all; and we can name the chief articles of which it conſiſted. They had a knowledge of *God*; of the *angels* of God; of a future judgment, preached to the world by Enoch, who *walked with God*; that is, obſerved his religion; and it was known that God had taken him, as he afterwards took Elijah.—The *ſerpent* ſhewed them what

* Gen. iv. 46.

they

they had to fear from ſpiritual enemies. The word ſerpent is not ambiguous, becauſe it is figurative; for all the revelation of things invisible is given under the image of ſome object of ſenſe. To call the tempter a ſerpent, is to give us more information about him, than if he had been called by the name under which he had been known in Heaven: that might have told us *who* he is, but this tells us *what* he is. The *Sabbath* was ſanctified from the beginning.—Thus was man always under *revelation*; taught to depend upon the divine promiſes; and in the hope of a future reward, to conſider this world as a tranſitory place, fit only to pitch a tent upon; becauſe another, and a better tabernacle, was expected. This was the religion of the people of God, when the law was given by Moſes. To the *worldly* obedience of the law, this world was promiſed as a reward; but the *other* world to the obedience of the Patriarchal faith; which diſtinction, if attended to, will remove ſome great difficulties. The promiſe of life was not to the *law*, but to the *faith* *; which the *law*, that came afterwards, did not ſet aſide, but preſerve. Moſes himſelf had the hope of the Patriarchs, and is celebrated for his faith, as one who, deſpiſing this world, preferred the *reproach* of Chriſt to the *treaſures* of Egypt. All Jews, who were Jews *inwardly*, preſerved the Patriarchal *faith*, and looked forward with the *hope* of their forefathers.

It appears then, that man has been under divine revelation from the beginning of the world. But how ſuperfluous would this be, if man was intended for a *philoſophical* or ſelf-taught worſhipper of God. Revelation would then have fruſtrated the end of his being. It was

* Viz. of Abraham.

certainly

certainly never *deſigned* that man ſhould make his own religion: neither was it *poſſible*, if he had attempted it. There is no religion without a knowledge of ſpiritual things; but all the ideas of man enter by his ſenſes; and therefore his mind cannot go beyond things ſenſible. He ſees the *works* of God: but he is not a religious creature, till he knows the *will* of God: which the natural creation cannot ſhew him. The heavens declare the *glory* of God, but they do not declare the *will* of God. If it may be queſtioned what man can know of himſelf? it is eaſily reſolved. To know what reaſon *can* do, let us ſee what it hath done. This brings a ſubtle queſtion to a matter of fact. The *Heathen* world never had a ſcheme of *reaſon*; but a religion, by tradition, with *prieſthood*, *ſacrifices*, *atonements*, *prophecies*, and *purifications*, ſuch as nature never thought of, and poſitively rejects, *now*, as weak and ſuperſtitious. If philoſophers, on ſome occaſions, utter ſublime ſentiments, as if they had known God, we aſk how they came to know more than the ſavage? How but by education; that is by information; by *hearing* of thoſe who knew more than themſelves: for which advantage they travelled over the world. If one man can ſee another man at the diſtance of twenty miles, we are ſure that this cannot be done by his natural faculties, for then others would do the ſame. We are ſure he muſt have ſome ſupernatural aſſiſtance; and every artiſt knows what it is. The caſes are parallel: if any man *knows*, what no man can ſee, we are certain he muſt have been told it; he muſt have had, either directly or indirectly, that information, which increaſes the power of his *reaſon*, as a teleſcope increaſes the power of his *ſight*.

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There is another argument, which demonſtrates the impotence of *reaſon* in all matters of *religion*; but I offer it with diffidence, becauſe it is not common. Every ſenſible perſon will find it to be true, that when we think, we always think in words, and that it is not poſſible to think without them. Language therefore could not originate in the human mind; for if it did this abſurdity would follow, that man *without* thought could perform that which required *moſt thought* of all. From all that appears, language has been a regular ſyſtem, from the beginning of the world: and if we ſhould allow it poſſible that man, with one language, might have the wit to form another, the queſtion will always ſtill recur—How did he come by the knowledge of the firſt? Philoſophers waive the queſtion about the origin of language, though there is none more important, and tell us that the uſe of language is to *record* our thoughts or communicate them; which is true as far as it goes; but the firſt uſe of language was to communicate to man the *thoughts of God*, and that muſt have been in the *words of God*. Otherwiſe we are driven to the monſtrous ſuppoſition, that man made the language in which God converſed with him. From revelation, it is well underſtood, that man had a language from his Creator. Without language man is not a rational creature, therefore language is prior to reaſon; and nothing can be more certain than that language was prior to man. The Scripture repreſents God himſelf expreſſing his mind in words before man had a being.—*Let there be light.—Let us make man:* and in the New Teſtament we read of the *tongues* of *men and of angels:* we hear Michael ſpeaking to Satan. Language was therefore before man in that inviſible world, from whence revelation cometh; and

nothing

nothing can be ſo reaſonable as that language and revelation ſhould come together: indeed the one was made for the ſake of the other, man having always been what he now is, a creature *taught* of *God*; and without language there can be no teaching. Thus all will be conſiſtent; and where is the difficulty? We know that God, in the two tables of the Ten Commandments, gave men *letters* from heaven, though it may be thought eaſier to invent an *alphabet* then a *language*. Concerning the ſtate of man, on his firſt entrance into life in this world, there is no diſpute amongſt Chriſtains properly ſo called: he had a capacity of reaſon, which (with language added) made him teachable; and a freedom of the will, which entitled him to the rewards of obedience. By the firſt he underſtood the law, which was to be the rule of action; by the ſecond he ſignified his obedience which cannot be without freedom of choice. We are to conſider farther, that the ſtate in which theſe faculties are exerciſed, muſt be a ſtate of *probation:* and this cannot be but under the terms of ſome covenant; and as none but God could *give* the rewards of obedience, none but he could promiſe them. He that promiſes them, impoſes the terms on which he will beſtow them.

No perſon ever was ſo abſurd as to ſuppoſe, that man himſelf could make the terms on which he is to be accepted; for then man would be in the place of God: and every other law which does not include thoſe terms, muſt ſignify nothing. On the breach of the *firſt* covenant, God was pleaſed to admit man to a *ſecond*—a covenant of grace: and if revelation was neceſſary under the firſt covenant, much more under the ſecond: for man knowing himſelf to be in a ſtate of condemnation and forfeiture, and ſeeing no way out of it,

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muſt have ſunk into deſpair. *If thou wouldſt enter into life*, ſaith the Scripture, *keep the commandments*. It is not ſaid, "keep to a morality of thine own invention," but keep the commandments of God. That man ſhould command himſelf, and be at once the maker of the *law* and the *ſubject* of the law, is one of thoſe philoſophical abſurdities which can be admitted only by thoſe who place all power in the hands of the people, and make them both ſovereigns and ſubjects at the ſame time, rather than admit the authority of God, which anſwers every difficulty.

There is one part of the moral law very remarkable, and which never could be of human original. The tenth commandment forbids evil *thoughts*; but no human tribunal could forbid that, of which no human tribunal can take cognizance. The ſearcher of hearts is the only judge of what no eye can ſee but his own. *Man* may claim againſt *man*, the liberty of *thinking*; but againſt God he has not that liberty; and the tenth commandment expreſsly takes it away: therefore it was not of man, but of God.

It is farther to be argued, that where there is no law there is no tranſgreſſion: *I had not known ſin*, ſaid the Apoſtle, as a natural man, but by the law. Nothing can be unlawful till there is ſome law to make it ſo, and ſome ſuperior who has a juſt authority over him that is commanded. If man were that law-giver, then man would be ſuperior to himſelf, which is contrary to the nature of things; and the Scripture delivers us from the difficulty, by declaring there is *one law-giver*, and that he is *God*; which leaves no place for man to give law to himſelf. Certain it is, that man is never charged with diſobedience on the ground of any ſuppoſed natural

law; but is rather connived at and excuſed for that *ignorance* which is unavoidable, when he is no longer under the law of revelation: whereas no man can be ſuppoſed ignorant of the law of obedience, if nature is able to teach it. How exceedingly guilty would thoſe Heathens have been in ſuch a caſe, who, having loſt the light of revelation, fell into that deplorable ſtate which the Apoſtle deſcribes in the firſt chapter to the Romans, out of which they never emerged till they were called by the Goſpel, and raiſed, as it were, from the *dead*. It has lately been well obſerved, concerning the *ſavage ſtate* *, that when men are once ſunk into it, they continue in it for ever, unleſs ſome accident brings them out of it. It is the doctrine of the Bible, that a man no ſooner withdraws himſelf from the teaching of God, but he immediately falls under the power of Satan, who keepeth his goods in peace till a ſtronger than he comes upon him. Man does not fall from the light of revelation, to another light of *reaſon*; but into darkneſs, under the Prince of Darkneſs. Human philoſophy teaches us, that man was called from the religion of reaſon to the religion of revelation; and that the firſt is the only ſure foundation for the ſecond. Not ſo the Scriptures; which aſſures us, that men were called from the power of Satan unto God. The Goſpel found the Heathens in a ſtate which it calls groſs darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death; but which, according to modern theories, ought to have been a philoſophical ſtate of light and wiſdom. But what was their worſhip? It was abominable; their morals were looſe and infamous, even of the wiſeſt amongſt them; all of which is extremely credible, becauſe we have an example of

* By the Rev. Mr. Doig, of Stirling.

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the like before our eyes: we ſee a nation who, with all the improvements of art and learning, have, to the aſtoniſhment of the Chriſtian world, renounced revelation; and the deplorable ſtate of ſavage wickedneſs, which hath immediately followed, is viſible to us all; robbery, ſacrilege, and murder, are no longer *crimes*, but *duties*.

Upon the whole then, it is clear, that reaſon never *could*, and in fact never *did*, invent a rule of life agreeable to the will of God. So far as religion conſiſts of articles of faith, and a belief of things inviſible, it is a direct impoſſibility that we ſhould have them by nature: they muſt enter by the *ear*, for they cannot enter by the *eye*. And as to the rule of obedience, it is to be found only in the commandments of God, from whence men always had it. If there are in the Scriptures any expreſſions which ſeem to countenance a contrary opinion, and have been produced by learned men for that purpoſe, there muſt be ſome miſunderſtanding about them; for in ſuch a caſe the Scripture would teach contradictions; which no Chriſtian can admit. To rectify abuſes and miſunderſtandings, would be a tedious, and I truſt, after what has been ſaid, an unneceſſary taſk. I ſhall ſpeak only of one text, which has given the authority of the Scripture to a ſuppoſed ſufficiency of human reaſon. In the Engliſh verſion, the Apoſtle Saint Paul ſeems to teach, that the Gentiles which have not the law, *do by nature* the things of the law. Upon a firſt view, this ſeems poſitive; and has been applied with great confidence to prove, that man can make his own religion. But *nature*, in the Apoſtle's language, has not the ſenſe which is neceſſary to the argument. He ſpeaks of thoſe who are *Jews by na-*

ture, where nature can mean nothing but *birth*, *parentage*, and *education*. The paſſage in queſtion has an unfortunate comma, ſo miſplaced as to give a wrong turn to the meaning, and make it ſay that the Gentiles do by nature the things of the law *; inſtead of ſaying, that the Gentiles, which have not the law of *Moſes* by *nature*, that is, are not *born Jews*, do the things of the law and fulfil its *meaning*, through the faith to which they were now converted, and ſo become a reproach to the Jews who had the law of Moſes and did not keep it. This way all is conſiſtent; the doctrine is like all the reſt of the Scripture, and agrees with the whole drift of the Apoſtle's reaſoning, who argues expreſſly to the ſame effect in another part of the chapter, that the righteouſneſs of God is manifeſted χώρις νόμε —*without* the law; and ſo was found in thoſe who being not Jews by birth, had not the law by nature. There is the authority of manuſcripts for the right reading; but there is, unhappily, a great majority for the wrong, and the error has had fatal effects †.

But ſuppoſe we leave the ſceptical philoſopher to himſelf, and let him proceed to make his own religion, what will it be at laſt? what can it be? It cannot contain one article of ſaving faith. If it ſhould give us the being of a God, it cannot tell us that he was the maker of heaven and earth. For that the heaven and earth were made by

* Rom. ii. 14. Ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει, τὰ τῦ νόμε ποιῇ, ἔτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσι νόμος.

† A diſcourſe on the true reading (or rather true *conſtruction*) of this text, with a refutation of the doctrine to be drawn from it, is about to be republiſhed, in a compilation now in the preſs, for the uſe of young ſtudents in divinity.

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the word of God is an article of faith, and is accordingly put into the Apoſtles' Creed. When Heathens philoſophized for themſelves, they poſitively denied the doctrine, and pronounced matter and the world to be eternal. If it ſhould be allowed that reaſon points out a God to us, who will that God be? Not the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, the name by which Chriſtians are to be ſaved, but a God in *one perſon*, who has been ſet up as ſuch by Arians and Socinians ever ſince the new religion of human reaſon came into faſhion. It is equally defective in every other particular. It tells us nothing of the powers of darkneſs with which we are at war; it has no redemption, no ſanctification, no church, no ritual, no reſurrection, no life everlaſting; and, not having theſe things, it can never do us any good: no mortal can be aſſured of ſalvation on its principles. But it doth not ſtop here. It not only does us no good, but does infinite miſchief: being totally different in character from the wiſdom of God in revelation, it ſoon raiſes its creſt againſt it, and bids it defiance. For thus argues the rationaliſt, that as nature teaches no myſteries, none are wanting; as nature adminiſters no ſacraments, none need be received; as nature orders no tithes, none need be paid: that theſe, and other duties, all ariſe from a groundleſs perſuaſion which we call faith, but which he calls *ſuperſtition* and *fanaticiſm*. As nature is of no communion, he argues farther, that all religious differences are mere trifles; all churches are uſeleſs: that as religion is a thing inward in the heart, all outward worſhip is ſuperfluous. With this cant did the philoſopher fall to work, many years ago, in France, and we now ſee what hath come of it. Open blaſphemy is as yet confined to another country; but great changes have taken

place

place amongſt ourſelves. Even the Puritans, who in the laſt age diſputed the ceremonies of the church, have now moſtly fallen into the new ſyſtem, and become as adverſe to the doctrines as the authority of the church. Thus it muſt happen when rights of *nature* are ſet up againſt the principles of *revelation*; men muſt grow worſe and worſe, till they throw off every ſacred obligation. In the purſuit of this argument, we, of the preſent age, have an unhappy advantage over all that have gone before us. *We* have ſeen what *they* never thought of. *We* can trace the whole progreſs of infidelity, from its firſt ſtarting to the end of its courſe; and can reaſon with undeniable truth, from ſome late lamentable facts. We ſee that when Chriſtianity goes, all the religion that was affected to *ſerve a turn* goes with it. Man does not revert to a middle ſtate of philoſophical morality, but to that deplorable ſtate in which the Goſpel found him, or to a worſe. For there is a remarkable difference between the native Heathen and the apoſtate Chriſtian; the former retained many good principles from tradition, which ſerved to correct the ferocity of nature, and keep ſociety in civil order; but when men throw off Chriſtianity they loſe, at the ſame time, all that was good in Heatheniſm: in conſequence of which, nature riſes up with all its corruptions unqualified, and all its violence unreſtrained—without honour and without excuſe. This fact is ſufficient to convince us, if we did not believe it before, that when man takes himſelf out of the hands of *God* he falls into the hands of the Devil: and he who imagines that man can ſubſiſt on earth, without being under one or the other, may be proud of his philoſophy; but he has not the wiſdom of a child who has learnt the Catechiſm.

God

God forbid I ſhould think myſelf qualified to inſtruct thoſe before whom I have the honour to ſpeak, on ſo great and deep a ſubject as that we have been conſidering; many of my arguments were propoſed to the public, many years ago, by a learned and accompliſhed divine of the Church of Ireland, with whoſe labours I wiſh we were all better acquainted; for then that baſe philoſophy, which has faſcinated the vicious and the ignorant, and calls itſelf *reaſon* (but is in fact moſt irrational, and deſtitute of the truth), would appear under its proper character. Man is a creature who now *is*, and ever *was*, *taught of God*; and, if this be the caſe, it muſt be his greateſt misfortune and miſery to break looſe from that teaching, and put himſelf under the direction of his own wiſdom. We need not trouble ourſelves with ſpeculating on the probable conſequences of ſo doing; we may look at France and ſee them all fully diſplayed: where preſumptuous vanity, taking the chair, hath raiſed, on the ruins of faith, impracticable theories of *reaſon*, of which every effect is contrary to what is at firſt profeſſed and pretended. They charged religion with a ſpirit of perſecution, and were full of the praiſes of toleration; but, at the firſt opportunity, they perſecuted religion, and tolerated blaſphemy. They, who declaimed againſt the cruelty of tyrants, have deſtroyed or exterminated near three millions of their countrymen, and began their courſe with a new apparatus, for the adminiſtration of—DEATH! They, who charged the guilt of all wars upon the ambition of princes, took upon them to carry war into every nation, for the ſpreading of their own anarchy. When royalty was removed, all were to be free and happy! But the principle of unity being gone, faction ariſes againſt faction, with no other remedy but that of cutting off one another.

another. Behold the philoſophers who give wiſdom to the world! The new deliverers of the human ſpecies from the fraud and impoſition of revelation! (without whoſe *kind* aſſiſtance all is darkneſs and ſlavery) who have been building upon their boaſted reaſon, till they have loſt all the foundations of truth, and are departed ſo far from the common ſenſe of mankind, that if the caſe were not too miſerable, they would be as ridiculous as they are impious.

All theſe evils, ariſing from the ſubſtitution of reaſon, inſtead of revealed religion, it is ſurely our duty to be aware of all bad beginnings; to watch the firſt ſeeds of infidelity, as they appear in ſpeculating moraliſts and metaphyſicians, that the fearful conſequences may be prevented. A cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, at its firſt riſing, will increaſe till the heavens are darkened, and wind and ſtorm ſweep away the productions of the earth. One looſe expreſſion, of an unſuſpected popular writer, againſt ſome great doctrine or duty of religion, may make a breach which malice or levity will ſoon widen, till all the art of man cannot repair it. The attempt to reconcile Chriſtianity with human reaſon, has a fair and plauſible appearance, and may proceed from a good intention; but let us note the progreſs. At firſt it is admitted, that the *truth* of God is to be *approved* of by the *reaſon* of man: then it is to be examined and *judged* of by the reaſon of man; and our thoughts are to be the meaſure of his thoughts: at length reaſon dictates, and takes all to itſelf:—and ſo God, who was at firſt *approved*, is at laſt excluded. A *friend* (or one who appears to be a *friend)* begins with ſome new experiment on religion; ſoon after comes an *enemy*, and he carries it on to a fatal concluſion.

Such

Such ſeems to have been that order of things, a long and ſerious conſideration of which, has prevailed with me to offer you the foregoing diſcourſe.

If we are to be ſaved from the ſpreading infection of the times, much, if not all, will depend on the conduct of the clergy; and the text will teach us how to proceed. It gives us the plain rule, which I have all along inſiſted upon, that *faith* cometh by *hearing*. The *faith* has been attacked—the *faith* is to be maintained: if we preſerve *it*, God will preſerve us. And how is it to be preſerved? Certainly by the ſame means which produce it. It cometh by *hearing*, it is to be preſerved by hearing. It is therefore the great duty of the miniſtry, to *tell* the people what God hath *told* us: they cannot believe what they do not hear.

With thoſe who know no better, the rational ſcheme may have a ſhew of learning, and procure us that applauſe which will do us no good in the end; but the Scripture hath the words of *eternal life*: and if we deliver them faithfully, we may ſave ourſelves, and them that *hear* us.

Now to God, &c.

FINIS.

Such seems to have been that order of things, a long and furious contestation of which, has prevailed with me to offer you the foregoing dilemma.

If we are to be saved from the spreading infection of the times, much, if not all, will depend on the conduct of the clergy; and the text will teach us how to proceed. It gives us the plain rule, which I have all along insisted upon, that faith cometh by hearing. The faith has been attacked—the faith is to be maintained: if we preserve it, it will preserve us. And how is it to be preserved? Certainly by the same means which produce it. It cometh by hearing, it is to be preserved by hearing. This is one of the great duty of the ministry, to tell the people what they teach us: they cannot believe what they do not hear.

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With those who know no better, the rational scheme may have a show of learning, and promise us that opening which will do us no good in the end; but the Scriptures with the words of eternal life: and if we believe them faithfully, we may live entirely, and then

FINIS.